Putting a Spring in your step

By Johanna Leonard

Spring has sprung, and aficionados of creative pursuits can revel in colorful storytelling concerts, an opportunity to give back to our local creative community, and summer camp on the horizon! From lighthearted to poignant stories, multiple opportunities abound to catch free storytelling events that listeners can experience live at Stagebridge or from the comfort of home, so get ready to mark those calendars.

Springtime at Stagebridge

It's packed with free Storytelling Concerts, fundraising kickoff events, and an eight-day festival of free storytelling concerts. The ever-popular “Lunchtime Storytelling series continues at Stagebridge, with each hour-long session featuring two student storytellers regaling audiences with a variety of tales. The next three Thursday installments take place on April 20, May 4, and May 18.

Also on Thursday, May 4, Stagebridge kicks off its Spring fundraising campaign with East Bay Gives, a 24-hour "giving marathon" sponsored by the East Bay Community Foundation. Donors can help support the non-profit Stagebridge from midnight to midnight online or in person. Donations will gladly be accepted at the Lunchtime Storytelling event and all day on May 4.

For more information, visit www.eastbaygives.org/stagebridge. Listeners at home can call into the broadcast at 510-601-7445.

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By Cookie Segelstein

Computer tips and helpful suggestions, especially for people who are not entirely comfortable using their computers.

Dear MacMama:

I have Xfinity internet, and I am paying for a very fast connection (they call it “Performance Pro”), but when I am trying to watch a movie on my iPad, sometimes it still stalls. When I tried a speed test, it was half of the speed I was promised. What’s going on?

Derrick, Oakland

Dear Derrick:

Although in our area, cable internet is faster than DSL and in most cases U-verse, much of the time we’re not getting the speed that we are promised. If you read the fine print on your agreement with Xfinity, the speed is only guaranteed when you are hard wired to a modem/router. This means you would be connected from your computer to the Xfinity Gateway (modem/router) with an ethernet cable, sometimes called a cat 5E or cat 6 cable.

But most of us want Wi-Fi so we can be anywhere in the house to email, search the internet, and stream television and movies. But the speed of a wireless connection can be inhibited by many things, most likely distance from the router, but also proximity to other devices that put out electronic interference, like cordless phones and kitchen appliances and even materials that are in the wall.

One thing you can do, is to install a signal extender. This extends the wireless signal from the router. There are many types, a popular one is a powerline extender. This sends the Internet signal through the power circuits in your house. You have to make sure that the one you get is compatible with the Gateway, and in truth, I have not found these to be very effective.

The other option is to let the cable device provide the internet signal, and use another more powerful Wi-Fi router to provide the wireless signal. For example, a common set up is as follows:

- An Apple Airport Extreme is attached to the Comcast Gateway and a new wifi network is created. Then this can be extended by setting up an Airport Express (Apple’s smaller router) to extend the network.

- It sounds really complicated, but in most cases the whole thing can be set up in less than 20 minutes. The correct way is to turn off the wireless feature of the Xfinity device, so you don’t get what’s called NAT conflict. In real life, it usually doesn’t matter, and many of us just leave the Comcast Wi-Fi network as well as the one we created with the Apple device at. In most cases the setup works just fine.

- The most dependable way (and invasive, since you are going through walls) to have a good signal throughout the house is to run cat 5E or cat 6 cable through the walls and to a port in each room where you want internet. For example, I have four rooms where I want internet. So, I bought an eight-port switch, plugging one Ethernet cable into my airport extreme, which is plugged into my modem. I run the wire through the wall into four rooms. One end of each of these wires goes into the switch, and one end of each goes into wall ports in each room. Into two of these rooms you plug Apple Airport Extremes which now extend my Wi-Fi signal through the whole house much better than if they were just extending wirelessly.

- I know it sounds complicated, but it’s just running wire or^ electrical outlets, but these are just outlets for Ethernet go. Now my iMac is hardwired into the Internet, and I am getting the speed that I’m paying for.

- The actual reason I wired each room is because I needed a good Wi-Fi signal to operate my security cameras. But for most people just extending the Wi-Fi network you have will make your internet experience much better.

Why am I not getting the speed I thought I was promised?

One of the most underrated activities that older adults can do to benefit their health is walking for exercise and enjoyment. It seems like we do this every day anyway. As Spring gets started, I’ve been thinking that it’s an opportunity to say goodbye to all the rain, to get outside and take a walk.

I wondered how to start. How can I leave my office and computer and take the first steps to more activity?

The National Institute of Health tells us that “most inactive people get fewer than 5,000 steps a day, and some very inactive people get only 2,000 steps a day.” The institute suggests that we might try wearing a step counter to get a baseline and to see how we are doing. They also recommend creating a plan, after consulting with one’s physician. The plan might include recruiting an exercise buddy or creating a worksheet that will help get us started. We might even consider getting some new exercise clothes or shoes to boost our motivation.

Many know Dr. Andrew Weil who has gained recognition for his pro-active approach to health and wellness. He recommends a simple walking program. “Putting in 45 brisk minutes a day is quite simply the best practice I can imagine for a lifetime of health,” Weil said. “If you begin a daily walking program today, you can expect to enjoy longer life, lower weight and a better brain.”

We are fortunate walkers because Oakland has been rated one of the best places to walk in the nation. The Lake Merritt area, where our community is located, has a walk score of 95 out of 100 possible points. The National Walk Score is an organization that ranks the most walkable cities and neighborhoods in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Our location has been described as “a walker’s paradise” by this group and you can see why. We are situated in

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the heart of Oakland’s “Gold Coast” district that hugs the lake and is notable for its views, gardens and stunning period and modern architecture.

Oaklanders who like to walk are also the beneficiaries of the City of Oakland’s recent $198 million dollar investment in the restoration of Lake Merritt. With the support of Oakland voters and Measure DD funding, the entire urban lakeside, encompassing 155 acres, has been re-invigorated. Among the benefits for walkers are new pathways, a beautiful pedestrian bridge over the tidal estuary, and the shoreline has been restored.

It’s time for a walk! Now that Spring has sprung, I’m putting on my new walking shoes and heading out. Care to join me?

Johanna Leonard is Executive Director of The Lake Merritt and previously served as manager of The Lake Merritt Hotel. For more information or for a tour of the Lake Merritt Independent Senior Living, visit www.lakemerritt.com or call 903-3600.

Stagebridge—

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in to participate in the next two Tuesday Personal Storytelling Concerts in conjunction with Senior Center Without Walls on April 25 and May 23 at 300pm. These free hour-long concerts feature Stagebridge storytellers and invite listeners to share their thoughts at the show’s conclusion as part of SCWW’s award-winning program, which offers a variety of activities, education and support to seniors who can access an array of groups online or by phone; registration and membership are free. For details, visit Senior Center Without Walls at: www.seniorcenterwithoutwalls.org.

Get a jump on summer with Stagebridge’s Summer Performing Arts Camp for Older Adults, which runs from July 10–14 and offers a week-long taste of what Stagebridge has to offer, along with light breakfast, snacks, and activities to let one’s inner child re-emerge! For those seeking a more robust array of classes for a longer duration, Summer Session begins on June 19; various classes will run through August 25. Registration for the camp and summer session, as well as a peek at course offerings, begins on May 1.

Stagebridge was founded in 1978 by Dr. Stuart Kandell and is located at 2301 Harrison Street, inside the First Congregational Church of Oakland. For more information on any event listed above, visit Stagebridge’s website at: https://www.stagebridge.org.

Wednesday, April 12


5:45 p.m. Greenbank Ave. Auto Theft & Arrest. Report of a stolen white 1986 Honda Prelude. Driver seen wearing a red hat. Police pursued the vehicle but lost it near Ol-ive Avenue. Vehicle reported stolen at a nearby dentist’s parking lot. Subject detained at a parking lot near Linda Ave. 10:40 p.m. Parkside Ave. Caller reported hearing noises in a neighbor’s garage. Garage was undergoing construction. Officers sent to scene. All secure.

Thursday, April 13

10:39 a.m. La Salle Ave. Identity Theft. Subject using his Visa without permission. 10:53 p.m. Magnolia Ave. Report of two suspicious people in a car parked at Magnolia Avenue and Macklinon.

Friday, April 14


PPD—

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Unknown if from collision. Public Works on scene. 6:06 p.m. Estates Dr. Report of a white substance spilled onto the pavement. Officers on scene advise it is paint or grout.

Wednesday, April 12

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